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# THE DURHAM ORIENTAL MUSIC FESTIVAL AND ITS LEGACY

KEITH PRATT AND SIMON MILLS

**Authors' note:** 2016 marked the fortieth anniversary of a novel experiment in the modern cultural development of the United Kingdom, the first in a short series of unprecedented and subsequently unmatched festivals. More than forty years on, it is still talked about by the citizens of Durham and by musicians worldwide. This was the Durham Oriental Music Festival (DOMF). It was held three times, in 1976, 1979, and 1982. Now, as the number of those who attended and participated in it is dwindling, it seems appropriate to record what took place before all memory of it is lost. An archive of relevant papers covering the years 1972-88 was compiled and deposited for safe keeping in Durham University Barker Research Library (DULASC Add. Ms. 2014). It includes the programme books and reports that were compiled after each of the three festivals, but only a few of the many photographs that were taken and tape recordings that were made have survived, in private hands and BBC archives. One of us was a co-founder of the Festival and has frequently been urged to tell the story of this unique event in Durham history. We have therefore endeavoured to contact as many of the participants as we can from the 1970s and '80s, and much of this article is based on the memories of some of those who were there. Of course memories play tricks and our research has revealed and enabled us to correct some anomalies in individuals' remembrances of what took place. Here, however, we express our profound gratitude to all our contributors, and apologise for anything we may have omitted. We believe we have recovered much that may interest today's readers. We have endeavoured to source and corroborate our material wherever possible. Where there are gaps in the documentary authentication it is likely that we have relied on memory and oral anecdote, which may at least help to convey a sense of the remarkable atmosphere that prevailed in Durham in those far-off days.

Names: Names of participants in the three Festivals are spelled according to their own preference that appeared in the 1976, 1979 and 1982 programme books, and in Festival of East Asian Music (FEAM) literature (2010 onwards). Single inverted commas have been used to designate quotations from printed texts, double commas for quotations from private communications.

## PRELUDE

### (a) The Western discovery of Asian music

Marco Polo makes no mention of Asian music, though he must have heard plenty of it before and during the seventeen or so years he lived China in the fourteenth century (see Latham 1958). In Elizabethan England theatre audiences were not unfamiliar with Islamic culture (Brotton 2016; see also Bohlman 1987). At around the same time there were good musicians among the first Jesuit missionaries to China.<sup>1</sup> Early in the

eighteenth century Chinese and Europeans, working together at court for the Kangxi Emperor (r.1662–1722), compiled five volumes of scholarship on music, mathematics and the calendar (Pratt 1993). Jean-Joseph Marie Amiot SJ wrote the first European-language book on Chinese music while he was in Beijing from 1750 to 1793, and even composed music successfully in the Chinese idiom. He ‘is considered a precursor of modern ethnomusicologists.’<sup>2</sup> Yet it was evidently too soon for Chinese music to chime harmoniously in 18th-century English ears for there is no evidence that it was performed even at Versailles, where the Sun King admired Chinese culture, and although Jean-Jacques Rousseau illustrated Chinese musical notation in his *Dictionnaire de Musique* (1768), Charles Burney says nothing about it in his *General History of Music* (1789) (Bohlman 2013).

Neither did Burney mention Indian music, although the East India Company and the Raj were instrumental in introducing the British to Indian music. ‘Hindustani airs’ were collected in India and arranged for British domestic performance’ and ‘by the late 19th century ... it was widely believed that the music of the whole of the rest of the world could be taken to represent stages in an evolutionary process’ (Clayton 2007: 75, 76).

Inward migration from the sub-continent helped wiser counsel to prevail in the twentieth century, and in 1946 the Asian Music Circle (AMC) was founded by Patricia Angadi ‘to introduce eastern culture to Britain.’<sup>3</sup> Yehudi Menuhin accepted its presidency after visiting India in 1952 and Benjamin Britten later became a vice-president. The AMC brought Ravi Shankar on his first visit to London in 1956 (Lavezolli 2006: 61), and Vilayat Khan played at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1958. Among those who were strongly influenced by Indian music in the 1950s and ’60s were Imogen Holst and the Beatles, and

between 1970 and 1988 the Sanskritik Festival brought Indian music annually to British audiences.

(b) Durham in the 1970s

Early in the 1970s the world was in recession and reeling from the oil crisis. Though the UK began to emerge from recession in 1975 inflation reached 27 per cent in August 1976, and in December the IMF granted the Labour government a loan of 3.9 billion dollars.<sup>4</sup> The population of County Durham was a sparse half million.<sup>5</sup> To many people outside the north-east of England it was little known except as a region of declining coal mines and heavy industry, though in the past it had been the bishops of Durham who from their great Norman castle had stoutly defended the country for centuries against the invading Scots. They ranked third in the Church of England hierarchy and took a permanent seat in the House of Lords in London. Fishing was important and the seaports of Sunderland and Hartlepool were still busy with coal, timber and glass products, yet despite their long coastline Durham people were not great travellers and the majority were little concerned with the wider world. They were slow to embrace the concept of multiculturalism as it began to spread across the country in the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> There is a local tale that, even as late as 1992, when a primary school in a village not far from Durham was heavily criticised by OFSTED, it was because its children had stared at an inspector, the first black person they had ever seen.<sup>7</sup>

Today the north-east is still the least densely populated English region, but the city of Durham is home to over 48,000 inhabitants<sup>8</sup> and is renowned as one of the UK's

historic and cultural landmarks. The polluted air of the industrial era has gone and tourism is an economic pillar. In the early 1970s its university, founded in 1832, had a student population of around 3,000 and was one of the smallest in the country, though the reputation of its Schools of Music and Oriental Studies helped to single it out. Since then it has risen to take a place among the top hundred universities in the world.<sup>9</sup> Music features prominently among the activities of its current student population of approximately 17,500.<sup>10</sup> Its introduction to ethnomusicology forms the subject of this article.

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## II FIRST MOVEMENT

August 1976 is remembered in Britain as one of the hottest in living memory. In the north-east of England sunshine was 153 per cent above average, temperatures hovered around 30 degrees Celsius, and rainfall was 29 per cent of the monthly average.<sup>11</sup> Climatic, if not economic, conditions were appropriate for an event not only unprecedented in the history of Durham but of Great Britain, the first ever festival of oriental music.

The Festival had been four years in the planning. In 1972 Keith Pratt, a lecturer in Chinese at Durham University, spent three months studying traditional Korean music at the National Classical Music Institute in Seoul (Kungnip Kugagwŏn), the first British

student known to have benefited from such an opportunity.<sup>12</sup> His teachers, Choi Choongung (*kayagŭm*) and Chong Jaegak (*piri*), were two of Korea's best players of their instruments and afforded a total beginner an inordinate amount of their time, but at no time were either they or the host family with whom Pratt lodged willing to accept any payment for their generosity. On his return to Durham he discussed with Eric Taylor, Head of the School of Music, how to recompense them. "Perhaps we could arrange a festival for them," suggested Taylor, who had been to Java himself and already felt an enthusiasm for south-east Asian music (Taylor 1989). The idea took root, and together the two developed the idea of mounting a festival of traditional Asian music in which Java and Korea would feature prominently.

Broadly speaking the object of the Festival would be not only to repay Koreans for their generosity but to draw the attention of Western music lovers to the richness, complexity and beauty of music in countries beyond the European ambit.<sup>13</sup> Composers as varied as Mozart, Rimsky-Korsakov, Debussy, Sibelius, Poulenc and Britten had alluded to it but perhaps only reinforced a limited and stereotypical idea of oriental tonality among Western audiences. With somewhat hazy aspirations the Durham planners aimed to begin putting that right. The invited performers would be top class in their own countries and would be asked to play authentic traditional music without making any concessions to assumed Western taste. The Festival organizers had little idea of what they were undertaking, nor had they any real anticipation of the looming recession into which the economy was about to fall, but the next three and a half years, during which they sometimes seemed to be racing headlong into something of which neither they nor anyone else in Durham had any previous experience, would provide a steep and often

alarming learning curve. Yet when it was all over, when nerves had settled and it was possible to form an objective assessment of the impact of the investment of money, time and effort, it was decided that it was worth doing all over again, if not every year then perhaps triennially. In the end, the Durham Oriental Music Festival was held in 1976, 1979 and 1982.

A committee was formed early in 1973 comprising representatives from the city and university. Its chairman was the Indianist and curator of the Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art and Archaeology Philip Rawson (1924-95)<sup>14</sup> and Keith Pratt (b.1938) the secretary. The government's regional funding body Northern Arts, providing a channel to the Arts Council of Great Britain, was represented by Keith Stephens. As plans developed the University Chancellor, the Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, provided the benefit of his worldwide connections, as did his successor Dame Margot Fonteyn after his retirement in 1980; the British Council contacted its representatives in countries across Asia, asking them to identify and locate top class artists; governments and their cultural agencies in many countries offered help and advice; a regional agent of KLM Airlines was recruited to give travel advice. Some distinguished people took an interest in the project and lent their names as patrons. They included Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999), David Attenborough (b.1926),<sup>15</sup> the Earl of Harewood (1923–2011), Malcolm MacDonald (1901–81), Margot Fonteyn (1919–91), Lord Glenamara (born Ted Short, 1912–2012), Robert Ponsonby (b.1926), David Cox (1916–97),<sup>16</sup> Alexander Goehr (b.1932), John Marr (b.1927), Jean Jenkins (1922–90) and Philip Rawson. Keith Pratt joined the European Festival Directors (founded in 1952) at their Venice meeting in spring 1975, as a result of which news of Durham's developing plans was spread across

Europe by the Groupe Interculturel d'Information et de Coordination pour les Spectacles et les Concerts (Berlin and Venice), a body that took the lead in assisting tours by the best Asian artists.

To maximise the financial implications of their trip some of the invitees built wider international tours around the DOMF dates;<sup>17</sup> others planned to pack their bags after a week or two weeks and return home, usually via London. Happily, some groups would return to popular acclaim and a second festival appearance, and then go on to perform elsewhere in the UK: among these were the Sasono Mulio Javanese gamelan and the group from the National Classical Music Institute in Seoul.<sup>18</sup> What the invitation meant to its recipients in one case is shown by the following extract from the Minutes of the Financial Committee meeting 1975/7 of the Siam Society Under Royal Patronage in Bangkok:

‘4.4 (a) After many anxious fund-raising moments, and consequent split-second programme-printing deadlines, a group of eight musicians and two dancers from the Prasanmitr campus of Sri Nakharinwirot University was enabled to fly to England to take part in Durham University’s Oriental Music Festival. Countries represented included the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, India, Iran, Vietnam (via Paris) and Hong Kong.

Two successful programmes were given in a garden setting during daytime at Durham.

The group also “played for their supper” at a Thai restaurant in London on the occasion of the Queen’s Birthday, and gave a first-ever programme of Thai classical music at the Thai Student Association clubhouse in Kensington.



(b) Our intensive fund-raising drive among banks, business houses, associations and private well-wishers raised airfares and cash support to the value of 170,000 *baht* to which the Society contributed about the cost of one airfare. While in Durham the board and lodging was free, as it was for a night's stop with the Hon Vice-Consul for Thailand in Birmingham. The Chargé d'Affaires at the Royal Thai Embassy in London and the Education Councillor also arranged very economical accommodation for the group at the Thai Students Hostel in Kensington. Thai International provided some very necessary help with overweight baggage, which included the instruments and large quantities of books, bought in London.'<sup>19</sup>

But promises of funding were slow to come in for this unproven event and the committee suffered nerve-racking months as recession and inflation contributed to mounting costs, and begging letters and grant application forms were rejected or went unanswered. In his first annual report the Secretary wrote, 'We are under no illusions about the magnitude of the task we have set ourselves' (Pratt 1974). Planning a timetable proved complex; the recession told hold; and when the University Council declined to guarantee the Festival against loss<sup>20</sup> the initial date for the Festival was put back from 1975 to 1976; but eventually financial support was guaranteed by UNESCO, the Visiting Arts Unit, the English Tourist Board, overseas governments and their agencies, trusts, foundations, and numerous commercial and private donors at home and abroad. The University of Durham approved the organizers' financial estimates with little

investigation, but as a precaution against possible personal financial liability the committee formed itself into a Company Limited by Guarantee.

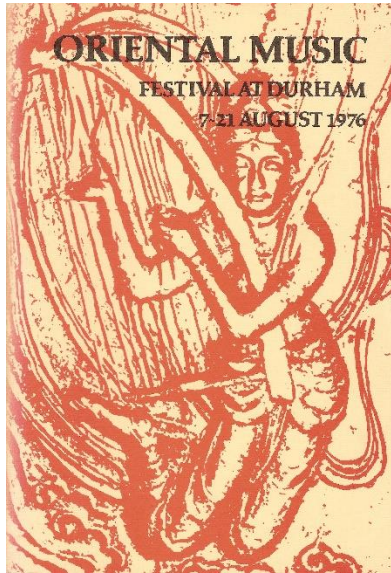


Figure 1. The programme book of the first festival. It shows the Festival logo, a flying deva playing a *konghu* harp, taken from the side of a Korean bronze bell of 725 AD. It appeared on all posters, tickets and programmes.

The pattern of the Festival, set in 1976, was repeated in 1979 and 1982. Programmes lasted for two weeks. Performers were asked to play in both first and second weeks if possible, and most did. Introductory lectures were arranged to provide a background to the music of each participating country and to that of certain others whose music could not be heard in live performance, namely Ethiopia, Burma and Mongolia. In 1976 more general talks examined topics such as music and art (by Philip Rawson) and music and government in the East (by Keith Pratt). Seminars were organized, in 1976 on Eastern music and Western composers (chaired by Professor Alexander Goehr), in 1979

on the Korean *kayagŭm* and regional features of south-east Asian music, and in 1982 on music and religion in modern Asia. Exhibitions and films complemented each year's programme. In 1976, the World of Islam Festival loaned an exhibition on 'The Qashqa'i of Iran',<sup>21</sup> and the film 'On the Edge of the Gobi,' one of twenty-one shown during the fortnight, was introduced in person by its maker Professor Owen Lattimore (1900–1989).

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### III PERFORMERS AND PERFORMANCE

Early in August 1976, as the days ticked by to the opening of the Festival, musicians and lecturers began arriving in Durham from Tehran to Tokyo and California to Hong Kong. A college minibus was borrowed and met those who flew in to Manchester Airport. The six Koreans were shocked and somewhat embarrassed to find that their driver was a university faculty member and that two of them had tried to teach him to play their instruments in Seoul four years previously. That driver, for his part, was also alarmed at the space required by their instruments and personal luggage, some of which had to be risked on the roof of the minibus as it made its way back up the M62 to Durham. The mayor of Durham gave a civic reception in the Guildhall, during which Professor Hormoz Farhat, Vice-Chancellor of Farabi University, Tehran, gave an opening speech in which he made the point that if music did indeed have a role as a universal language, then the West had no right to assume that it was its own music that had been or should be this inter-continental *lingua franca*.

In 1976 Durham had plenty of lecture rooms but no purpose-built concert hall. Events were scheduled to take place in venues all over the city, emphasizing that this was a festival for the whole city, not just the university. A total of sixteen concerts took place in university colleges, the 13th-century Great Hall of Durham Castle, the mediaeval St Oswald's church, the 19th-century Durham Town Hall and the 20th-century Durham Light Infantry Museum. Administration was simplified at the two later Festivals by using fewer locations, and the successful 1976 experiment of holding a dinner recital at Beamish Hall in the countryside outside Durham was repeated in 1979. A Korean programme scheduled to take place in Durham Cathedral chapter house in 1976 was relocated: on arrival the artists involved were fearful of its acoustics and requested an alternative venue, which was hastily arranged in the nearby University Music School.

The weather in each year was generally kind, and some of the artists departed with the impression that the remarkable temperatures they had experienced during the famously hot summer of 1976 were typical of the region.<sup>22</sup> The Fine Arts Ensemble from Sri Nakharinwirot University, Bangkok, was able to play *al fresco* in the garden of the School of Oriental Studies. Its programme included the simultaneous painting to music of a large and colourful picture, which the group donated to the University and which for many subsequent years was mounted in the corridor alongside the lake in Van Mildert College. In 1979 one of the Koreans cooled down by fishing in the River Wear and was stung by a wasp: he played his instrument with a swollen arm. Lecturer Terry Miller was also stung: "A young English friend offered to take me into the nearby countryside in search of red raspberries. Since these rarely grow wild in the United States, I wished to do this. After following a path along the river, we came into a light-density wood and

spied raspberry canes nearby. As I walked straight towards them, my friend said, “Oh, do you know nettles?” Having brushed these innocent looking plants only moments before, my reply was non-verbal but nonetheless clear: “YEOWWWWWW.” Now I was familiar with nettles.”<sup>23</sup> William Malm bought a sweater on arrival to keep himself warm, and perhaps safer.<sup>24</sup>

#### (A) SOLOISTS

*Instrumentalists*      The highest possible quality of performance was maintained through all three festivals. The tone for solo recitals was set by Feng Te-ming on the *pipa* lute. His programme for the opening recital at Beamish Hall on 7 August 1976 included ‘Pa Wang (The Tyrant of Ch’u) takes off his Battle Armour’ and ‘White Snow in Warm Spring.’ The *Nevada Daily Mail* later wrote, ‘When Feng plays the Chinese *pipa*, the sound of galloping horses and exploding artillery shells can shift in moments to the lyrical music of ‘White Snow in Warm Spring.’<sup>25</sup> Other soloists whose virtuosity dazzled their audiences in the three festivals were:

- *Oud* virtuoso and composer Salman Shukur. Shukur was Head of the Music Department and Professor of Oud at the Baghdad Institute of Fine Arts for over 30 years. It was said that ‘despite his being almost unknown in the western world, Shukur was to the oud as Paganini was to the violin!’<sup>26</sup> Yet despite his long and illustrious career he made only one LP, that recorded in London after the Festival in 1976.<sup>27</sup> According to the sleeve note when it was re-issued by Klimt Records in 2013, ‘Shukur’s compositions, while based on the Arab classical musical

tradition, attempt to bridge the gap between eastern and western music, and may be described as tone-poems, embodying both free and formal variation and improvisation.’<sup>28</sup>

- Ustad Rais Khan (b.1939). Rais Khan was the son of Ustad Mohammad Khan and nephew of Ustad Vilayat Khan and Imrat Khan, and has been acclaimed as the greatest *sitar*, *surbahar* and *veena* player of his times. His ‘elegant pacing and blinding speed entwined with sweetness ... gained him recognition as one of the great masters of his instrument.’<sup>29</sup> He played at the 1976 Festival.
- Ustad Zia Fariduddin Dagar (1932–2012).<sup>30</sup> Dagar won many international awards in his long and illustrious career as a *dhrupad* singer. Once described as a legend, he came in 1982 with his student Pandit Ritwik Sanyal, who was also building himself a distinguished *dhrupad* reputation.
- The Carnatic flautist B. N. Suresh (1945–1990) played in 1982. Though an engineer by profession he earned many plaudits as an instrumentalist, and won the All India Gold Medal (1963) and Karnataka State Award (1981). His performance in Durham, said Dr John Marr, ‘kept its audience totally entranced’. It was ‘a completely authentic programme that could not have been bettered, or better received, in Madras itself’ (Pratt 1982).
- Solo music for the Korean *kayagŭm* was played in 1979 by Professor Hwang Byunggi and Professor Lee Chaesuk, accompanied on the *changgo* by Ahn Hyeran. Hwang remains the best-known composer of modern traditional Korean music, bridging the musical traditions of East and West with compositions acclaimed worldwide (see Killick 2013). In the first half of the programme on 17

August 1979 he played what is thought to be the first full concert performance of his own *sanjo* in the UK;<sup>31</sup> in the second half Lee Chaesuk – the Seoul National University professor with whom Keith Pratt had lodged back in 1972 – played some of Hwang’s compositions, including ‘The Silk Road’ in which he draws on a broad range of musical styles to describe the passage of the Silk Road across differing cultures, a piece that ‘musically illustrated the concept of translucency with finely spun webs of sound created by extremely delicate strummings on the upper neck of the instrument.’<sup>32</sup> Professor Lee herself became a renowned authority on *sanjo* and was ‘the first Korean to gain a performing knowledge of the eight most famous types [...], making this music generally available in transcription for the first time.’<sup>33</sup>

- Of Li Xiangting his website says, ‘one the most important *guqin* players of his generation and a distinguished Professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing... the recital he held in 1982 at the Oriental Music Festival in Durham, England was the first of its kind in the history of the *guqin*.’<sup>34</sup>



Figure 2. Li Xiangting giving a master class

*Solo dance* Classical dance from India was performed by Chitra Sundaram, who enjoyed a glowing reputation in India and Britain,<sup>35</sup> and by Ritha Devi. Devi was ‘regarded as an extraordinary persona who has spread the traditional dance form Odissi in a softly radiant way. She has also been regarded as a celebrated dance critic. Today she has been counted as one of the few dancers who hail from India and exhibits the age old classical styles in their conservative and basic form.’<sup>36</sup>

The grace and colourful beauty of solo Korean dance was also demonstrated. The lovely Mun Ilchi, whose face greeted passengers passing into immigration at Kimp’o airport in the 1970s from a large and colourful billboard, gave a sublime performance of both court and Buddhist dance on 17 August 1976. Quite a different exposé of the art was given by Won-kyung Cho in August 1979, who danced both male and female roles with



‘energy tempered by grace.’<sup>37</sup> His programme included traditional dances from the folk, religious and court repertoires as well as a modern dance-drama, *The Water Mill*.

## (B) ENSEMBLES

In addition to solo recitals there were performances by small groups and larger ensembles from (in order, West to East):

- Turkey (1982) Necdet Yasar and Sadrettin Özçini, whose pioneering restoration of classical Turkish music was later honoured by the Turkish government.
- Egypt (1979) The newly-formed Musicians of the Nile, emanating from Luxor and managed by Alain Weber, performed in the tradition of Egypt’s gypsy families. “After the break came the Nile musicians.... They played their instruments – fiddles, reeds, drums – with absolute abandon. The fiddlers sometimes played their instruments on their heads or behind their backs. They walked around the stage making broad gestures and playing their music passionately. Weber attempted to keep them reigned in, but this was more or less beyond his powers.”<sup>38</sup>



Figure 3. The Musicians of the Nile

- Iran (1976) ‘Dariush Talai,<sup>39</sup> ... one of the great masters of Persian classical music, whose creativity combines fine authenticity and innovation’ and ‘one of the most qualified interpreters of traditional Iranian music’, led six musicians from the National Iranian RTV Centre for the Preservation and Propagation of Traditional Iranian Music.
- India (1979) When the return visit of the Thai government’s Fine Arts Department group was unexpectedly cancelled, a group from the Nava Kala expatriate organization provided a welcome performance of Gujerati music and dance.<sup>40</sup>
- Bangladesh (1976) A programme of vocal music and dance based on the poetry of Ranindranath Tagore was sung by Ritha Chakravarty and played by nine instrumentalists from the expatriate Theatre-Dance Group of Bangladesh.

- Thailand (1976) Audiences were spellbound by the beauty, poise and dexterity of the classical dancers from Prasarnmit University in Bangkok, accompanied by eight instrumentalists.
- Singapore (1979) The two concerts of instrumental music given by members of the Singapore Chinese Youth Orchestra Yong Phew Keng (*xiao*), Lim Meng Chau (*erhu*), and Lee Suat Lien (*yangqin*) included one at the Beamish Hall Dinner Recital.
- Laos (1982) Les Musiciens Traditionnels de Laos, a group of six artists led by Khampa Intisane and Nouthong Phimvilayphone, introduced traditional music and dance from this little known land.
- Vietnam (1976, 1979) Paris-based Professor Trần Văn Khê (1921–2016) was the world’s leading authority on the music of Vietnam and an expert performer. His visit to Durham in 1976 was his first performance in England. With his son Trần Quang Hai and daughter Trần Thị Thủy Ngọc he showed off seven traditional instruments, the *dàn kìm* (moon-shaped lute), *dàn tranh* (sixteen stringed zither), *dàn co* (two-stringed fiddle), *dàn ty ba* (pear-shaped, four-stringed lute), *trống nhạc* (drum) and *muống* spoons, and also sang in the style of both northern and southern Vietnam. The group was complemented in 1979 by Kim Chinh, principal actress at the National Theatre of Hanoi, and Trần Quang Hai’s wife and folk singer Bach Yên. Quang Hai remembers the programme being “richer and more attractive [than in 1976] with many folksongs from lullabies, love songs, alternate songs, and theatre songs. I remember that the

audience were impressed by my spoons technique in solo and in duet with my father and the wood block song *lang* by my sister.”<sup>41</sup>

- Indonesia (1979, 1982) Gamelan music was brought to Durham by twenty-five players from the Sasono Mulio School of Music and Dance Gamelan of the Surakarta Royal Palace, Baluwarti, under Gendon Humardani (1923–1983) in 1979, and by thirty-seven players from the ASKI Gamelan School in 1982.
- China (Hong Kong 1976, 1979; Beijing and Hong Kong 1979; Beijing and Hong Kong 1982) Three contrasting experiences were provided in consecutive Festivals. In 1976 Lui Tsun-yuen, Tong Kin-woon and Tsui Wah-nam showed off the versatility of the *gugin*, *panhu* and *erhu*. In 1979, following an invitation conveyed by former Prime Minister Edward Heath during a visit to Beijing, ten young musicians from the Central Conservatory of Music led by Fang Kun showed off updated versions of traditional Chinese instruments played under a conductor, at which some purists shook their heads. They shocked their audience still more with a harmonised version of the Scottish folk song ‘Home, sweet home’ at the conclusion of their programme. No such novelties attended the Hong Kong Jing Ying Youth Orchestra, which fitted Durham into its 1979 Western tour itinerary at its own request. Its 64 players comprised the largest group to attend any of the three Festivals, and the official report said they ‘made a sight and sound that had never been known in Durham before’ (Pratt 1979). Ten members of the band returned as the Jing Ying Youth Orchestra in 1982.
- Korea (1976, 1979, 1982) Members of the National Classical Music Institute performed varied programmes in 1976 and 1979 ranging from *kagok* to *sinawi*

and *sanjo* to *nongak*. In 1982 Kim Changja brought her ensemble from the Chŏngnong Music Society.



Figure 4: Members of the Korean NCMI group in Durham for the 1979 Festival

- Japan (1976, 1979) In 1976 Chiyoga Fujii and Momoyo Kishibe gave a concert for *koto*, *shamisen* and voice; in 1979 a *sankyoku* ensemble from Wesleyan University consisting of Namino Torii, Kono Kameyama, and Ryudo Takahashi<sup>42</sup> performed on *koto*, *shamisen* and *shakuhachi*.

*Puppetry* Puppetry was displayed in programmes of *wayang kulit* by Sri Hastanto in 1979 and 1982 and of Cantonese rod-puppet theatre by Mak Shiutong (Mai Shaotang) and the Hon Wah Nin Puppet Troupe in 1982. Of the Sasono Mulio show Fernau Hall wrote, ‘The Durham Oriental Music Festival rose to a magical height of enchantment last night, with the presentation of a Javanese shadow-puppet piece – Wayang Kulit... In traditional fashion one highly-trained artist ... manipulated all the puppets, spoke their lines, and gave cues to the gamelan orchestra.’<sup>43</sup> The Hon Wah Nin troupe surprisingly

arranged to play in Durham to the accompaniment of the Jing Ying Youth Orchestra, which may have broken the spell of traditional storytelling. However, to recreate something of a south-east Asian atmosphere both Javanese and Hong Kong puppeteers encouraged spectators to watch from both sides of the screen. The former also served Indonesian food when the performance lasted late into a hot night.

It often happened that programmes and notes obtained (usually with great difficulty) from the musicians in advance turned out, frustratingly, not to be what actually happened at the concerts. In some cases, the changes were simply announced at the performances, and with one or two exceptions there are no surviving records of such changes. In a few cases, concert organizers found out a day or two in advance about revised programmes, and Rob Provine recalls running to his state-of-the-art IBM Selectric typewriter to type out some of the new programmes, dash to have them reproduced and stapled, and then deliver them to the performance venue.<sup>44</sup>

#### IV LECTURERS<sup>45</sup>

The list of speakers throughout the series contained some of the most distinguished names in the world of ethnomusicology, including William Malm (b.1928), Shigeo Kishibe (1912–2005), Komal Kothari (1929–2004), and Hormoz Farhat (b.1929). Some came to lecture on the music of one country, some on more than one.



Figure 5. Professor William Malm and Administrative Assistant Maggie Berry meet Japanese musicians arriving for the 1979 Festival.

Among the engaging personalities who delighted those who heard and talked with them were such memorable characters as

- John Blundall (1938–2014), master puppeteer. He had trained to carve marionettes in Russia and make masks in Japan. Renowned internationally, he was perhaps best known in Britain as the founder of Cannon Hill Puppet Theatre and the creator of Basil Brush and the Thunderbird characters.<sup>46</sup> In 1979 he displayed and lectured on examples from his extensive collection of Asian puppets.
- Fernau Hall (d. 1988) was ‘doyen of ballet and dance criticism in the English-speaking world’ (Ford 1992: ix). Dance critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, he had been a student of Indian music and dance since before World War Two. In 1973 the

- government commissioned him to travel all over India to study the various forms of dance in the regions to which they belonged.
- Jean Jenkins (1922–1990)’s career as an ethnomusicologist in Africa, her sound recordings and her collection of musical instruments at the Horniman Museum were all testament to her forceful determination (Dijkstra-Downie and Bicknell 2007: 90–100).
  - Professor José Maceda (1917–2004) came to the 1979 Festival from Manila with a British Council Visitorship. He, like Professor Yoshihiko Tokumaru (on the music of Burma), prefaced his lecture with a film of his own making.
  - The great musicologist John Levy (1910–76) spoke in 1976 about recording the music of Bhutan for which he was renowned. His fieldwork was facilitated by a friend of the Bhutanese royal family and Durham alumnus, the late Michael Aris. Levy was a lover of powerful motorcycles and drove one up to Durham, but tragically died later the same year by the same means. Memorial lectures were given in his honour at the 1979 and 1982 festivals.<sup>47</sup>
  - Dacre Raikes OBE (1925–2013) was known as the ‘Teak Wallah’ after the great wooden mansion he had built for himself in northern Bangkok. A British businessman who devoted many of the 60 years he lived in Thailand to propagating classical Thai music around the world, he took large contingents of young Thai musicians abroad, raising all the necessary funding by his own efforts. It was he who master-minded the fund-raising campaign for the visit by the Prasarnmit University group in 1976.<sup>48</sup>



- Trần Quang Hai (b.1944) was well known for his versatile concert performances, broadcasts and recordings of Vietnamese music, but made a particular mark in Durham with his exposition on the art of Mongolian overtone (split-note) singing.<sup>49</sup>

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Accommodation was available in a University college, where the institutional food of the 1970s and '80s may not have met with universal satisfaction but the public did have opportunities to rub shoulders with players and lecturers and to join in both formal and casual workshop sessions. Timetabled classes included tuition on the *guqin* and *vina*, while Rob Provine recalls the sight on a warm afternoon in 1979 of *kaen* mouth-organs scattered around the hillside at [the college of St] Hild and [St] Bede, with Festival visitors learning to play while native musicians and Terry Miller ran from one to another to give pointers.<sup>50</sup> In the same year tuition was given in Javanese dance, and Michael Bryant later wrote: 'It is difficult to imagine a finer setting than Van Mildert College and any report would be incomplete without mentioning the spontaneous social atmosphere. On the lawn you might come across quiet discussions between the musicians and the Dutch visitors, or informal instruction in Javanese songs or dancing being given to one of the Vietnamese party, while simultaneously an impromptu puppet show was being given from a window overlooking the scene' (Bryant and Cordell 1979: 37–8).

Such interaction between the participants was of particular interest. 1976, for example, marked the start of a lifelong friendship between Bill Malm and Trần Quang

Hai. In 1979 the Korean group from Seoul were in the audience watching as the artists from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing played. At that time China and the Republic of Korea had no diplomatic relations. When the Koreans themselves performed their ambassador came up from London to hear them, and went backstage to congratulate them when they had finished. As they were getting changed the Chinese musicians burst in and began firing questions at them – ‘why your old-fashioned clothes?’, ‘why the old unmodified instruments?’, ‘why don’t you use nice harmonies?’ Gifts were exchanged with lots of handshakes and smiles, and the ambassador beamed with pleasure. But a heated debate followed and the leader of the Beijing musicians, Fang Kun, called a public discussion on the meaning of ‘traditional’ music and the evolution of the tunes now played as ‘traditional’. On returning to China he published an account of it in which he forcefully upheld the current Chinese interpretation of classical and traditional music, but which concluded: ‘The meeting lasted for three hours and the discussion was carried on in an exceptionally lively, harmonious and uninhibited manner. Different viewpoints were thoroughly opened up, leading to greater mutual understanding.’<sup>51</sup> His article was subsequently used for several years in ethnomusicology classes at Harvard University.

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There were surprising successes and, inevitably, a number of disappointments. On receiving an invitation to speak at the 1976 Festival the preeminent authority on mediaeval Chinese music, Laurence Picken, wrote to the Secretary that if such a thing were organized in Cambridge he would make sure he was a hundred miles away.

Fortunately members of his research team were not so shy: Rembrandt Wolpert, Richard Widdess and Jonathan Condit all attended, and on August 11th the Leicestershire Schools Chinese Orchestra gave a programme of Picken's reconstructed Tang tunes (then in print and published by OUP), accompanied by Arthur Cooper reading his translations of Tang poems (1973) and calligrapher Shui Chien-t'ung (of the BBC Chinese Service) writing them simultaneously in fine brushwork.

Efforts were made in 1976 to invite some leading whirling dervish dancers from Turkey, but the most authentic and prestigious troupe would not leave their home base, and the Festival committee would not risk bringing over one of the many lesser teams about which it could gather no intelligence.

Neil Sorrell recalled later that 'Professor Eric Taylor was enthusiastic about Javanese gamelan, yet [for the Festival in 1976] a lecturer (Ernst Heins of the Jaap Kunst Centre for Ethnomusicology) had to be brought over from Holland, and it was not possible to include any live performance. Still, the Festival created a new climate, and it was as a direct consequence that the Indonesian ambassador ordered a complete Javanese gamelan' (cit. Posnett 1989: 19). Three years later a gorgeous presentation of *wayang kulit* wowed an evening audience of adults but flopped when few children turned up to see an afternoon performance arranged specially for them.

The occasional pairing in a single programme of performers from different countries or musical traditions was not to everyone's taste: the contrast between the precise formality of the Turkish programme in the first half of the concert on 12 July 1982 and the improvised exuberance of the Egyptian villagers' band that followed was too much for Terry Miller.<sup>52</sup>

In 1979 Sŏng Uhyang's performance of *p'ansori* (an extract from *Ch'unhyangga*) was greeted with acclaim by audiences to whom it was musically strange and linguistically unintelligible. When, in 1982, the Festival received the royal stamp of approval with HRH Princess Alexandra's acceptance of the Presidency, the organizers gambled on the evident taste for classical Korean music that audiences had already shown and invited her to a Korean concert. Exhaustive preparations were made with the royal household and police for her to visit on 21 July and to attend a concert by Kim Changja's Chŏngnong Music Society. Unfortunately indisposition prevented her from coming in person but the Lord Lieutenant of the County represented her, tapping his feet through what the organizers believed (with some advance qualms) must surely have been the first ever complete playing in the UK of the long instrumental suite *Yŏngsan hoesang*. It was given a triumphant reception.

In the same year Durham County Council displayed a large and fascinating exhibition in County Hall of posters illustrating the cultural life of Hong Kong. This had been generously donated by the Hong Kong Urban Council at the request of the Festival Secretary. Providing an excellent survey of contemporary Chinese graphic art it was much appreciated and later adopted by the County Art Advisor for use in schools, but it failed to attract a commensurate number of Festival visitors.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment was the poor media coverage: even a press conference in central London in 1979, at which Lee Chaesuk played the *kayagŭm*, was poorly attended. Local papers did their bit in reporting events at each of the Festivals. The *Northern Echo* observed that 'Unfamiliarity breeds ignorance and misconceptions, which the Durham Oriental Music Festival goes a long way to dispel. It could mark a

very significant advance in enriching Western art, which for too long has remained oblivious to what the West has to offer' (cit. Pratt 1976). In *The Guardian* Keith Stephens wrote that 'there has never been such a concentrated and well-focused presentation of every aspect of Oriental music as at the Oriental Music Festival in Durham' (ibid.). Otherwise, however, the national dailies and weekend press took scant notice. In those days, whether by rail or road Durham was indeed a longer journey away from London than it is today, and a reporter from a local paper admitted that fear of showing ignorance was a great deterrent to press critics. The BBC, on the other hand, recorded and broadcast one worthwhile series of talks and concert recordings, and overseas coverage was reported on Norwegian and Korean radio and in the Canadian, German, Iranian, Hong Kong and Korean press. Trần Quang Hai recalls that "Mr. Dô Văn from BBC radio was there and made an interview with my father about the general panorama of Vietnamese music, and with me about the way of playing spoons because he never thought that the spoons could be included in the traditional music in Vietnam."<sup>53</sup> During the interval of a Korean concert, all the BBC engineers were downstairs at the bar, along with a large part of the audience. The soloist after the interval, Chông Chaeguk, tried to get Robert Provine to summon everyone back to their seats with some raucous farmers' music. Since Provine could see that neither engineers nor audience were making their way back but was determined that the BBC should be ready to record *before* the musicians started playing, he started making a slow introduction and kept going until he saw the crew sprinting to their equipment. The musicians got on stage "in about two seconds" and started playing immediately. The piece was a big hit, but in his own words Provine "aged considerably." Adding insult to injury, the Third Programme had Provine's talk on

Korean music re-read in 'standard' English lest its listeners couldn't understand his gentle mid-Atlantic coast accent. There was no TV coverage at any of the three Festivals, apart from a single interview given by Keith Pratt on the local BBC news bulletin 'Look North'. The only scheduled broadcast, a programme about the Indonesian gamelan by Thames TV, was lost because of a technicians' strike.

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The Durham police were aware of what was happening but took little notice except when an ambassador was expected to attend. Security was not high on the agenda in England at that time, but despite the mix of people from so many different parts of the world no trouble was reported. One participant recalls, however, that "When the concert ended, the Egyptians hurried to the back of the hall where they had set up a virtual bizarre (*sic*) selling everything from musical instruments to rugs, and began bargaining fiercely with the curious concert-goers. I attempted to buy a double-pipe reed instrument from one. The price was too high, so I attempted to bargain. We were bargaining vigorously when I decided I'd just return to my dorm room and attempt to buy the instrument at another time. The musician followed me to my room, berating me non-stop for refusing to buy the instrument at his unusually low price, reduced only for me (all spoken in Egyptian, of course). Finally I agreed to buy the instrument." It later disappeared from his room and he never saw it again.<sup>54</sup>

The organizers themselves were nervous about the public response to this unprecedented venture. Nissan had not yet arrived to build cars in Sunderland and the

north-east of England was not recognized for its international outlook. The concept of Britain as a multi-cultural society was still decades away and 'World Music' had not yet become an accepted musical category. The internet was unheard of and extensive commercial advertising was unaffordable, but notices placed in the musical press and sent around university mailing systems did succeed in bringing people from across the UK and beyond. In 1976 halls with seating capacity from 150 to 600 were comfortably filled and an average of fifty people attended the lectures.

A note in the *Report* on the 1982 Festival records that at some concerts latecomers were unable to find seats and had to stand. At each festival attendances increased from the first week to the second as word of events got around, and by 1982 a loyal band of devotees could be identified. One of the Festival's staunchest supporters and promoters was Imogen Holst. It was thanks to her that the RVW Trust provided five bursaries for students to attend the 1976 Festival, and her presence delighted all those who met her.<sup>55</sup>

## V FINALE?

Perhaps, in retrospect, there was a degree of naïvety and even over-ambition in what the Festival organizers set out to do. They were aware of developments in ethnomusicology in American universities, of the work taking place in the UK at Dartington College of Arts in Devon and at the Universities of London (School of Oriental & African Studies), York and Belfast, but were perhaps deluded by its limited progress in the UK into seeing themselves as complete trailblazers.<sup>56</sup> Yet the readiness of so many great musicians to travel to a new and untried undertaking far from the known musical centres of the world

was nothing if not flattering and rewarding, and if Durham Oriental Music Festival did not altogether re-invent the ethnomusicological wheel it did at least propel it a good deal faster and attract significant attention at home and abroad. To the end of his life the doyen of Korean musicologists, centenarian Professor Lee Hye-ku, treasured the honorary doctorate bestowed on him at the 1982 Festival as one of his proudest achievements.<sup>57</sup>



Figure 6. Lee Hye-ku greeted by the Mayor of Durham, Councillor W. Stobbs, after receiving his honorary doctorate.

When the decision was taken in 1983 not to plan a fourth festival there were widespread expressions of regret, but it was becoming too expensive both in time and money for its principal backer and organizer, the University of Durham.<sup>58</sup> What had begun as a fringe activity for academic staff with no more support than a single fixed-term administrative



assistant had grown beyond manageable proportions. In 1982 over one hundred players and lecturers took part, most of them coming to Britain specifically to take part in the Festival. Box office receipts in this year were almost double those in 1979, yet the Arts Council of Great Britain, whilst arguing that the Festival was too important to lose, declined to support it when approached about the funding of a permanent administrative post. This was the final straw.

There were in any case signs that the Oriental Music Festival had begun to achieve one of its main objectives, a widening recognition in the United Kingdom of the spread, depth and value of traditional music east of Europe. The Javanese group were invited to perform at the 1979 BBC Promenade Concerts, in what the *Daily Telegraph* called ‘the most significant [programme] of the whole series.’ In the same year the Chinese orchestra from Beijing went on to play at the Edinburgh Festival. The first WOMAD Festival took place in 1982. Its organizers had taken note of Durham’s experience and though its remit and format were different from theirs it continued the ongoing transformation of the British festival scene. Among those who would participate in WOMAD and sign a recording contract in consequence were the Musicians of the Nile. Years later an Arts Council publication acknowledged that ‘the Durham Oriental Music Festivals... were landmark events that raised national awareness of non-western traditional and classical music, alerted larger bodies like the BBC to a potential new audience and served as an inspiration to many world music festivals, including WOMAD’ (Jeanes 2005: 6).

Gamelan music sprang to life in the UK as a result of the Durham Festivals. The Indonesian embassy ordered a gamelan, packed by Neil Sorrell and Alec Roth, which

arrived in 1977.<sup>59</sup> Students from York University were the first to use it, before it was played in the 1979 and 1982 Festivals and at the Promenade concert: ‘A spectacular performance at the second Durham Oriental Music Festival of 1979 was followed by an enthusiastically received appearance at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts in London. The group returned in 1982 to further acclaim’ (Posnett 1989: 32–3). Sri Hastanto, a top student of the Academy in Surakarta, came with them to Durham in 1982, did his PhD there and later became head of the Academy back in Java. Neil Sorrell and Durham alumnus David Posnett took the embassy instruments to WOMAD in 1983, the same year that the Indonesian government gave a gamelan to Cambridge University and a Durham gamelan was formed with instruments donated by the ASKI School gamelan.<sup>60</sup> In 1987 Alec Roth founded the Southbank Centre Gamelan Programme, to which the Indonesian President, Suharto, presented a gamelan as a gesture of friendship to the British people.

Academically, the study of ethnomusicology had been encouraged in British universities. Perhaps to its own surprise, Durham University took note that besides the invited participants it had attracted music teachers and students from as far afield as Australia, South Africa, Hong Kong, Singapore, Israel and the USA, and enhanced its own support for courses in ethnomusicology. In 1989 Posnett wrote, ‘There is also a scholarly tradition now, especially at the School of Oriental [and African] Studies in London, the Queen’s University in Belfast, and the University of Durham, where I am endeavouring to maintain a tradition begun by Alec Roth and Sri Hastanto – hard acts to follow, both’ (Posnett 1989).

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## CODA

The pioneering Durham Oriental Music Festivals have provided much inspiration for subsequent ‘world music’-focused concert ventures within Durham City. In 2008, almost 30 years after the final DOMF, one of the 1979 performers, the Korean *kayagŭm*-player Lee Chaesuk recommended to Simon Mills, ethnomusicology lecturer in the Music Department, and his wife Park Sunghee that they should attempt its resurrection. Both were keen to bring East Asian musical performance back to the North-east, Mills following in the footsteps of previous staff members Keith Pratt and Robert Provine and Park maintaining strong connections with diverse Korean musicians developed during her studies in Seoul National University and SOAS. They negotiated with violinist Mieko Kanno, Chairman of Durham’s professional concert series Musicon,<sup>61</sup> who agreed to include an annual Festival of East Asian Music (FEAM) in the Musicon series. First, however, a pilot event was organized in 2009: a single troupe of Korean shaman musicians was invited, joint-funded by Musicon and the Korean Cultural Asset Division. Once in Durham, the troupe gave two concerts (followed by Q&A sessions), a practical workshop and a lecture/demonstration; promisingly, attendance far exceeded expectations with advertising successfully drawing regular Musicon concert-goers and university staff and students from the Music, Anthropology and Religious Studies Departments – no doubt attracted by the prospect of encountering real shamans.

Since 2010 a slightly larger format has been followed, although still programmed within and largely funded by the Musicon concert series; FEAM has not become a stand-

alone entity in the fashion of the original DOMF. Each Festival has centred around three concerts, showcasing musics from three different East Asian countries, typically Japan, Korea and China.

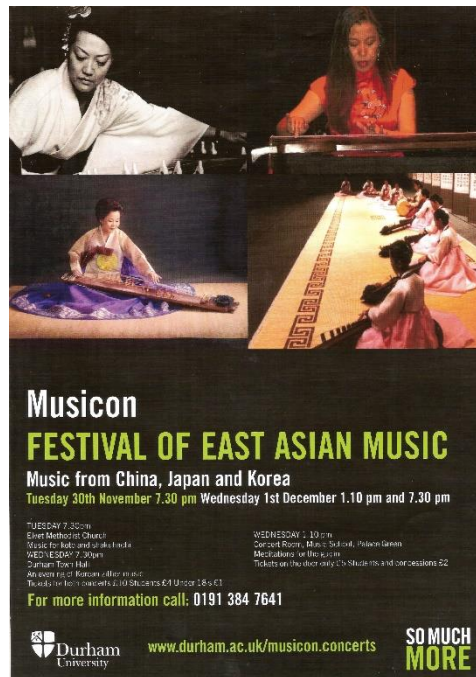


Figure 7. The poster for the first larger-format Festival of East Asian Music, in 2010, including Lee Chae-suk (bottom left image).

For the first four years a theme was attributed to each Festival, highlighting differences and similarities and ensuring a sense of unity, an approach that could not possibly have been applied to the many diverse concerts of DOMF. The themes were “Zithers” (November/December 2010); “Bamboo” (indicating wind instruments, February 2012); “Song” (March 2013); and “Old and New” (May 2014). This practice was abandoned for 2015, largely because the musicians who had been targeted wished to perform markedly contrasting repertoires. Following the original DOMF approach,

FEAM programmes have complemented central concerts with explanatory lectures and workshops: ethnomusicologist David Hughes (who had attended the 1982 DOMF) gave lectures on all three themes in 2010, 2012, and 2013; the traditional Korean classical singer Moon Hyun and Japanese folksong group Abeya gave lecture-workshops on Korean and Japanese singing in 2013; and the Korean composer Yoon Hyejin gave a guest lecture about her compositions in 2014. Q&A sessions have also been held at the close of many concerts, sometimes with the use of interpreters and contributions from other academic specialists. For example, an expert on the Korean epic narrative genre *p'ansori* and a close friend of the invited performer Lee Joo-eun, Helen Willoughby, had joined the Korean group for their 2013 UK visit and answered audience members' questions at the end of the performance.

Given the greatly scaled-down format, FEAM performers have spent much less time in Durham than the DOMF musicians used to. Typically, each Festival's events have been spread across just two days – or three, in 2014 – leaving only a little time for sight-seeing. However, it appears that the musicians have still managed to derive more from their visit than simply giving a performance; the composer Yoon Hyejin remarked in 2014: “We came here to give a concert – just to practise a bit and then perform – but we've received more: this is a healing place.” Following the DOMF approach, the FEAM organizers have tried to facilitate interaction between the different groups, ensuring that they stay in the same accommodation, attend each others' concerts, experience a folk-music session in a local pub, and contribute to David Hughes's lectures by giving practical illustrations of instruments, tone colours, and musical patterns. At the same time, organizers have sought to ensure diversity and difference between the performances

themselves, following the DOMF approach of using varied venues around the City.

While some of these venues have promoted a striking contrast between Eastern costumes and sonorities and Western decor – a particularly effective juxtaposition in the Durham Town Hall concerts – the Oriental Museum promoted a rather different venue/performance relationship for the 2014 concerts, with the Eastern artefacts seeming to complement the music and vice versa.

Despite greatly reduced funds and scale, the FEAM concerts have followed the DOMF pattern of bringing top performers from the East to perform in Durham and supplementing Durham University funding (via Musicon) with additional international support, most notably from the Korean Arts Council and Daiwa and Sasakawa Foundations. The following groups have made the long journey: in 2010, the Asian Zither Association led by Lee Chaesuk; in 2012, the Jeong Ga Ak Hoe Korean ensemble; in 2013, the Korean classical song specialist Moon Hyun, *p'ansori* specialist Lee Joo-eun, and Japanese folksong and shamisen group Abeya; in 2014, the Korean composer Yoon Hyejin and her ensemble Hal and the virtuosi Chinese *guzheng* zither players Sun Zhuo and her mother Qu Yun; and, in 2015, the Kim Sunok Korean music and dance ensemble. In 2015, the Chinese *erhu* player Ma Xianghua had been scheduled to visit with three other musicians from the Central Conservatory in Beijing, but because a visa was not granted to their non-performing manager the group decided to pull out – which highlights a new challenge faced by world music concert organizers in the UK today.

Nowadays, the sourcing of skilled East Asian performers closer to home has also become a possibility, offering opportunities that were not available to DOMF back in the 1970s and 80s. Accordingly, the FEAM organizers have invited diverse musicians

currently based in Europe: in 2012, the Japanese *shakuhachi* player Kiku Day (from Denmark) and *biwa* lute player Marshall Thomas Charles Marshall (from Ireland); in 2013, the Mongolian singer Urna Chahar-Tugchi (from Germany); and, in 2015, the Japanese *koto* zither player Mieko Miyazaki (from Paris). The Festivals have also featured UK-based performers: in 2010, Cheng Yu (*guqin*) and Dennis Lee (*xiao*), and Keiko Kitamura (*koto*) and Clive Bell (*shakuhachi*) (returning in 2014 together with Okinawan music expert Robin Thompson); in 2012, Lu Panling (*dizi*) and her Chinese music ensemble; in 2013, the professional Japanese folksinger Yoshie Asano Campbell, travelling down from Glasgow to join Abeya; and, in 2015, Cheng Yu (*pipa*), returning with three other prominent members of the London Chinese Music Ensemble. To all the invited groups and soloists, the organizers have only given scant specifications regarding programme selection, merely recommending an overall concert duration and requesting that the programme include both traditional repertoire and more recent compositions if possible; this latter request highlights a slight yet significant divergence away from the DOMF ethos, where greater emphasis was placed on showcasing the most esteemed and ancient repertoire.

Of course, technological advances in communication have generally rendered pre-arrival negotiation with performers far easier than it was in the 1970s and '80s. The same advances have also offered new strategies for advertising amongst potential concert-goers, with SNS messages and website posts supplementing posters, letters and word-of-mouth. Awareness of the FEAM has also been promoted through reviews, most notably the annual reviews by Andy Hamilton (in *Jazz Review*) and the 2013 Festival review by

Korean music critic Hyun Gyungchae in the music magazine *Gaekseok* (Auditorium) – a review that also highlighted the Festival’s pioneering predecessor, the original DOMF.

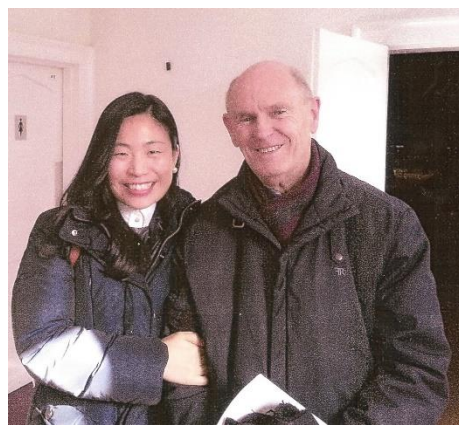
Inevitably, the FEAM has faced various challenges, some leading to disappointment and others to a sense of triumph. Whereas DOMF took place outside of University term time during the summer, the FEAM has been scheduled during term time as a component of the University’s Musicon professional concert series – specifically, during the colder winter/spring months. Unfortunately, the 2010 and 2013 Festivals were marred by snowy conditions. In 2010, these were particularly extreme. Train services were limited and delayed and public transport and taxis ceased operating. The two groups representing Japan and China arrived at their venues with just minutes to spare, struggling through the snow with their instruments, and the organizers’ hired mini-van was one of only very few vehicles crawling and sliding along the icy roads, going to collect the visiting Korean zither players from the airport. Durham’s civil offices all closed early due to worsening conditions and Mills had to plead with the Durham Town Hall to stay open for that evening’s Korean music performance. In the event, although attendances were very low, there was no sense of disappointment; the audience members had demonstrated unusual commitment in struggling out to the venue. 2013 also presented a variety of weather- and travel-related problems. The Korean group experienced an eight-hour delay during their journey to the UK and later missed their outgoing flights due to a taxi breakdown. Urna Chahar-Tugchi sang her Mongolian songs in the Music Department concert hall to an undeniably small throng while heavy snow was falling outside. And the Japanese group Abeya gave a performance in the market-place with dark clouds overhead and few passers-by wishing to pause and spectate.



Subsequent performances in London turned out to be better attended – confirming the obvious fact that the North-east continues to be somewhat less eclectically multicultural in its tastes and demographics than other regions.

Various other challenges have been encountered during FEAMs, the year 2013 proving strangely problematic. In that year, it was decided to provide a running English translation of the Korean *p'ansori* text on Powerpoint display, making use of commonplace technology to address what had seemed like an insurmountable problem of translation for the DOMF *p'ansori* concert some 30 years earlier. However, during her performance, Lee Joo-eun occasionally diverged from the pre-arranged text, unpredictably choosing to add and remove passages in response to the feelings of the moment (as some senior *p'ansori* performers commonly do). This caused Park Sunhee much alarm, necessitating some frantic forwarding and reversing through the sequence of slides and a little confusion amongst audience members. That same year, most of the Korean group also required cooked Korean meals, creating a good deal of extra kitchen work for the Festival organizers. Plus, as usual, there were various challenging staging issues to resolve relating to the Korean musicians' common practice of sitting on the floor to perform. In particular, it was discovered that the Music Department's two full-size grand pianos appeared to loom menacingly behind the seated musicians, making it necessary to go on a quest to acquire some vaguely oriental screens. In subsequent years, with the concerts taking place in the display areas of the Oriental Museum and Wolfson Gallery, staging decisions have been informed by a host of health-and-safety regulations – more stringent now than in the 1970s and '80s.

For FEAM organizers, the links with DOMF are thrown into relief most poignantly when older audience members and performers reminisce. For example, Lee Chaesuk remembers a great deal about her first visit to Durham in 1979 when the city came across to her as distinctly “fresh and developed”. In 2010, wandering around the city and university buildings once more, she expressed great surprise at the lack of change, stressing how acutely it contrasted with the ceaseless transformations she had experienced in Korea: “Back then it felt like going forwards into the future; now it feels like I’ve gone backwards in time.” And although *p’ansori* singer Lee Joo-eun was only a small child in the 1970s and ’80s, it emerged that she too had links with DOMF. Following her 2013 performance in the music department concert hall, Keith Pratt casually asked her about her musical lineage; when Lee mentioned her teacher’s teacher Sŏng Panlye, Pratt recalled that she had actually performed in the very same venue in 1979 – a discovery that immediately heightened the significance of that evening’s performance.



Figures 8 and 9. Lee Joo-eun performing *p’ansori* with Kim Insoo, and with Keith Pratt after her recital, 2013

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#### END NOTE (Keith Howard)

The Durham Oriental Music Festival was a formative experience for me. In 1979, I served as a student helper, manning stalls and displays and occasionally helping the Korean performers. By 1982, I had begun my doctoral studies in ethnomusicology, and was poised to leave for PhD research in Korea. But, let me briefly broaden the discussion, because I have always felt that the Festival stood at a nexus in our engagement with the Other.<sup>62</sup> On one side, Orientalist scholarship was being increasingly challenged by an ethnomusicology that had its feet firmly planted in anthropology, in Britain as in North America.<sup>63</sup> From the 1980s onwards, we have witnessed ethnomusicology's expansion at the expense of Western musicology – in Durham as in many other university programmes. Ethnomusicology has also thrived by embracing other sub-disciplines such as popular music studies and sound studies, which were not part of the Festival. WOMAD, incidentally, when it launched straight after the 1982 Festival, bussed Musicians of the Nile from Durham to London, but also put the distinctly non-Oriental, non-world trumpeter Don Cherry and pop groups Echo and the Bunnymen and Simple Minds on its stage. On the other side, Neo-liberalism, spreading its tentacles outwards from Thatcher and Reagan,<sup>64</sup> had begun to challenge the foundations of cultural

diplomacy through which the Festival could garner sufficient support to sponsor expensive ‘traditional’ music groups.<sup>65</sup> The obvious argument that DOMF, had it continued beyond 1982, would have had to adjust to survive, has to be wrong, given the recent success of the Festival of East Asian Music. But it remains interesting to muse on the difficulties we continue to face in funding events that feature what so many of us find important in music traditions of Asia – the classical qualities, the manifestations of history, and – in contrast to so much pop – the quantifiable distinctiveness. These, though, are the very things that have made ethnomusicology viable as a discipline of difference, and which continue to be important to the musicians, dancers, and policy makers we work with in Asia. Just maybe, then, the Appaduraisque vision of a deterritorialized world fostered by globalization that has ruled for the last few decades will be countered by a Tomlinsonian reterritorialization, wherein we will again come to value *gamelan*, *gagaku*, and *jeongak*, and under which an embracing Festival has the potential to be reinvented.

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With thanks for their contributions to: Lee Chaesuk, Bill Malm, Terry Miller, Rob Provine, Alec Roth, Neil Sorrell, Trần Quang Hai, Gen’ichi Tsuge, Bell Yung.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.silkqin.com/01mywk/themes/matteo.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thebeijingcenter.org/themes/memoires-concernant-lhistoire-les-sciences-les-arts-les-moeurs-les-usages-c-des-chinois-tome-vi-de-la-musique-des-chinois-tant-anciens-que-modernes/> Examples of his work can be heard on 'Concert Baroque à la Cité Interdite' (Auvidis Astrée E 8609, 1996). For his description of Chinese music see Volume VI of *Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences les arts, les moeurs, les usages, etc., des Chinois: par les missionnaires de Pékin*.

<sup>3</sup> See Patricia Angadi's obituary in *The Guardian*, 17 July 2001.

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/jul/17/guardianobituaries.books>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/world-recession-oil-crisis.htm>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.durham.gov.uk/media/1227/2011-Census-First-Data-Release/pdf/2011CensusFirstDataRelease.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Some commentators mark the beginning of large-scale migration into Britain from Commonwealth countries with the Ugandan Asian crisis of 1972. See Singh 2003.

<sup>7</sup> The story may be apocryphal, but the result of the OFSTED visit was certainly damning ([buvfc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/search.php?adv\\_index1=keyword...](http://buvfc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/search.php?adv_index1=keyword...)), and the north-east of England probably remains the English region with the highest white British population (<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/may/18/ethnic-population-england-wales>).

<sup>8</sup> In 2011 the resident population of the City of Durham was estimated as 48,069 (Office of National Statistics, 2011 Census).

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2016/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/student.registry/statistics/summary/1.1summary/151-1.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/media/pdf/p/s/Aug1976.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Now known as the National Gugak Center. Founded in 1951 this vital institution is seen as the descendant of the Royal Music Office of the late Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) (see Kim Kyunghee 1991). In 1972 the dancer and *haegŭm* player Kim Ch'ŏn-hŭng (1909–2007) still performed and taught there. As a boy he had been taught in the Yiwanjik Aakbu, 'a court music bureau that had originally been part of the royal palace, but which became a private association after the beginning of the Japanese occupation' (Van Zile 1991:45–60). It was not only this link with the past but his mastery of his arts that earned him the title of National Living Treasure. For Pratt's recollections of the Kungnip Gugakwŏn in 1972 see Pratt 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Eric Taylor wrote in an introductory piece: 'In this country non-western music has not received anything like the attention it deserves, both as a study in its own right and for the light it throws on our own traditions. No one imagines that the situation could be changed overnight; but if the festival is able to promote further interest in oriental music as a subject of serious study it may prove to be a significant milestone.' (Taylor 1976:652).

<sup>14</sup> The Gulbenkian Museum is now called the Durham University Oriental Museum. Rawson was already a member of the Asian Music Circle and together with John Haywood had established a north-eastern branch in Durham in 1961.

<sup>15</sup> Attenborough had carried a reel-to-reel tape recorder with him when he travelled the world photographing wildlife for 'Zoo Quest' from 1956 to 1962, and recorded many invaluable examples of non-Western music which he deposited in the BBC archives ('World Music Collector', broadcast on Radio 3, 25 December 2016). He found Indonesian music particularly entrancing, and was persuaded to become a patron in 1982 by his friend Professor Fred Holliday, a marine biologist and then Vice-Chancellor of the University.

<sup>16</sup> Cox was a composer, musicologist and BBC music producer with particular responsibility for the Overseas Service. He continued to be actively involved in BBC music after his retirement in 1976.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/obituary-david-cox-1265281.html>

<sup>17</sup> The Japan Foundation reasonably made this a pre-condition for their support.



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<sup>18</sup> The players from Bangkok returned in 1979 to play in Cambridge, Sussex, and York, and to give workshop sessions in London and Aldeburgh, but did not come to Durham.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.siamese-heritage.org/jsspdf/1971/JSS\\_065\\_2o\\_AnnualReport.pdf](http://www.siamese-heritage.org/jsspdf/1971/JSS_065_2o_AnnualReport.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Letter from the Treasurer A.M. MacWilliam, 5 June 1975. The decision was reversed in time for the two following Festivals.

<sup>21</sup> The World of Islam Festival was a three-month international presentation of performing arts, exhibitions, and films with a supporting educational programme mounted in London and across the UK in Spring 1976. See Sabini 1976. (<http://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/197603/the.world.of.islam-its.festival.htm>)

<sup>22</sup> They were certainly not. ‘The effect of the summer was huge. Drinks, ice cream, barbecue, and bikini sales rocketed during the summer but the greatest impact was the lack of water. Reservoirs were drying up and the Government launched measures to conserve water. People were advised to share baths, to use the bath water to water the garden, to place bricks in toilet cisterns to conserve water. Standpipes were launched and many parts of the UK had no running water for much of the day. The drought caused forest and heath fires in the south and fireman were unable to control these because of a lack of water. Gardens and parks were brown and parched. The Government created a minister for drought, Denis Howell, such was the serious nature of the drought.’ <https://www.netweather.tv/forum/topic/29546-summer-of-1976-30th-anniversary/>.

<sup>23</sup> Private communication, October 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Private communication, October 2015.

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<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1915&dat=19810417&id=aQEhAAAIBAJ&sjid=nQFAAAAIBAJ&pg=1020,3565670&hl=en>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.discogs.com/Salman-Shukur-Oud/release/4930324>

<sup>27</sup> Decca – HEAD 16, 1977.

<sup>28</sup> See also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salman\\_Shukur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salman_Shukur)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.indiamusicinfo.com/profiles/indi%20pop/ustadrais Khan%20.html>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-force-behind-dhrupads-revival/article4699670.ece>

<sup>31</sup> *Sanjo* is a suite of movements played continuously by a solo instrument to the accompaniment of a single drum. “The BBC re-broadcast recording of Hwang’s performance in Durham is an important record of an early version of what has developed into one of the most important and longest versions of *sanjo* in Korea” (Robert Provine, private communication, October 2015).

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/23/arts/recital-art-of-kayagum-from-korea.html>

<sup>33</sup> Robert Provine, private communication.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.chineseculture.net/wangfei/lxt/>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.istd.org/staff/chitra-sundaram/?from=/classical-indian-dance/>

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.indianetzone.com/13/ritha\\_devi\\_indian\\_dancer.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/13/ritha_devi_indian_dancer.htm)

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/01/13/arts/dance-won-kyung-cho.html>

<sup>38</sup> Terry Miller, private communication October 2015.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/dariush-talâi-mn0000678589>

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<sup>40</sup> For the Nava Kala organization, founded by the Indian community expelled from East Africa, and its success in Britain in the early 1970s see Naseen Khan in Iyer 2013: 26.

<sup>41</sup> Private communication, January 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Ryūdō Takahashi established a school in Yamagata and was head mentor of the Garyu-Kai, a society formed to preserve the Fuke (Komuso) shakuhachi tradition. He ‘learned the entire Fuke repertoire under renowned teacher Uramoto Sekicho and also studied with Yokoyama Katsuya.’ <http://www.komuso.com/people/people.pl?person=763>. In Durham his master classes proved very popular.

<sup>43</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 14 August 1979.

<sup>44</sup> Private communication, November 2015.

<sup>45</sup> 1976: John Baily (Afghanistan), Jonathan Condit (Korea), Hormoz Farhat (Iran), Fernau Hall (Indian dance), John Haywood (Iraq), Ernst Heins (Java), Jean Jenkins (Ethiopia), Shigeo Kishibe (Japan), Komal Kothari (Rajasthan), John Levy (Bhutan and Tibet), Lui Tsun-yuen (China), John Marr (South India), Keith Pratt (Music and Government), Dacre Raikes OBE (Thailand), Philip Rawson (Music and Art), Jeune Scott-Kemball (Indonesia), Trần van Khé (Vietnam), John Whitworth (the Leicestershire Schools’ Chinese Orchestra).

1979: Hahn Man-young (John Levy memorial lecture), Ernst Heins (Indonesia), José Maceda (Philippines), William Malm (Malaya, China, Japan), Onno Mensink (Gong-chime music), David Morton (Thailand), Robert Provine (Korea), Yoshihiko Tokumaru (Burma), Gen’ichi Tsuge (Japan), Trần Quang Hai (Mongolia), Trần van Khé (Vietnam).

1982: Christoph Bürigel (Turkey), Sri Hastanto (Javanese puppetry), S.D. Humadarni (Indonesia), Lee Byong-won (Korea), Lee Hye-ku (opening address, Korea), John Marr (South India), Onno Mensink (Bali), Terry Miller (Laos, Thailand), William Radice (Tagore’s Songs), Poul Røvsing Olsen (Egypt, Islamic singing), Bonnie Wade (John Levy memorial lecture), Richard Widdess (North India), Bell Yung (China, Cantonese puppetry).

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.theworldthroughwoodeneyes.co.uk/blundall.html>

<sup>47</sup> An archive of his recordings is preserved at Edinburgh University. See <http://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/celtic-scottish-studies/archives/archive-projects/john-levy-archive>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/obituaries/article3764950.ece>

<sup>49</sup> Illustrated at <http://www.overtone.cc/profile/TRANQUANGHAI>

<sup>50</sup> Personal communication from Robert Provine, October 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Fang 1980:38-40; trans. Keith Pratt with comments by Robert Provine and Alan Thrasher in Pratt 1981:1–15. Through the 1980s *gudai yinyue* ‘ancient music’ and its practitioners, much excoriated during the Maoist era, made a notable come-back in China. It would be nice to think that the experiences of Fang Kun and his group in Durham in 1979 might have played a small part in sustaining its supporters in the dying days of Maoist ‘political correctness’.

<sup>52</sup> Private communication, October 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Private communication, January 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Terry Miller, private communication October 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Grogan 2010:412.

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<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting here that Eric Taylor and Keith Pratt attended two rare London appearances by Japanese musicians in 1975 and 1976 which further strengthened their determination to press ahead with the Durham initiative. The first was the Ondekoza Taiko drummers' first visit to the Roundhouse, Chalk Farm; the second a performance by the Imperial Japanese Gagaku musicians, who played in the Royal Albert Hall. It would, of course, have been quite inappropriate to consider either of them in the Durham setting, but their reception offered encouragement for what was already being planned there.

<sup>57</sup> Lee Chae-suk, private communication April 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Approximately £63K in 1982, an increase of 16 per cent on 1979. The University's contribution was estimated at around £27K. Pratt 1982.

<sup>59</sup> This is the *slendro/pelog* set now kept at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.durhamgamelan.org.uk/>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.dur.ac.uk/musicon.concerts/>

<sup>62</sup> As this article has noted, the BBC was behind the curve and arguably did not cover the Festival as it might have done. It had not taken advantage of David Attenborough's tape recordings, and even today has cut virtually all 'world music' from its main stations.

<sup>63</sup> This is not the point to attempt a definition of ethnomusicology, but a considerable number of influential texts have come from Chicago and Illinois since the 1980s, for example Nettl 1983 (and later editions), Nettl and Bohlman 1991, Blum, Bohlman and Neuman 1993, and Bergeron and Bohlman 1992.

<sup>64</sup> DiMaggio 1986 provides a useful exploration of the impact of Reagan on arts policy in the United States.

<sup>65</sup> Rakcheyeva 2012 offers a detailed exploration of cultural diplomacy through music. One organization that continues to utilize sponsorship of the type we are intimating here, linking back to the Extra-European Arts Committee of the 1980s and 1990s, is the Cultural Co-operation and its Music Village project.